

Federal Aid Servicing Solution: Responses to Questions

April 25, 2016

The responses to all solicitation-related questions received in response to the solicitation are below. This document replaces the Responses to Questions posted on April 20, 2016. Please note that minor changes have been made to the previously posted responses to questions 3, 7, 8, 23, and 24.

<u>#</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>FSA Response</u>
1	Please confirm that this solicitation is for a system provider only.	The solicitation is for a single solution provider that will provide all high level requirements included within the Statement of Objectives. The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service contact center, financial reporting, etc.
2	Is this Phase a "Single Technology System Provider" only RFP or should Teaming agreements for loan servicing activities be included?	Subject to the requirements of the solicitation, Teaming agreements may be included in proposals. The solicitation is for a single solution provider that will provide all high level requirements included within the Statement of Objectives. The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service contact center, financial reporting, etc.

3	The Solicitation is unclear relative to the roles and responsibilities of the system provider and the multiple servicers. Please provide a narrative clearly explaining FSA's desired operational model that specifically calls out the roles and responsibilities of each participant.	Although the single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center, additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action. They will function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation.
4	Is default management and default collections the work currently performed by DMCS? If yes, please provide the requirements? If no, please define the scope within this procurement?	Default management is practiced by all servicers to avoid borrower default. Default collections is typically associated with the current Debt Management Collection System (DMCS) and Private Collection Agencies. The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
5	Will FSA consider awarding more than one servicing solution provider? If so, is there a limit?	FSA anticipates awarding to a single servicing solution provider.
6	Will the selected vendor be expected to perform the servicing activities associated with operational processing/transactional processing as part of this procurement?	Yes.
7	Will the selected vendor be expected to perform call center activity (both inbound and outbound)?	Yes. However, additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later via a separate procurement action. They would function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing contact support.
8	Please provide a definition of 'Contact distributions' under high level requirement 17 d.	FSA anticipates incoming calls will be received at a single number and that the single servicer provider will provide the functionality to distribute those calls to multiple contact centers. Email and chat may also require distribution to multiple contact centers.

9	Are offerors only required to convert active loans or would offerors need to bring over all history of closed loans?	The single servicing solution will need to accept/manage closed/inactive loan information. The single servicing solution will need to be able to support adjustments to previously closed loans/grants as well as ongoing servicing of those loans/grants when needed.
10	Under this new system, will borrowers have the opportunity to switch servicers?	There will be a single servicing solution so borrowers will no longer have any need to switch servicers.
11	Will the solution be hosted by the solution provider or by the Department itself?	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department. At the end of the contract period, the Department will retain unlimited right to use the solution, as will future O&M providers for the solution.
12	Under Section 3.0, item 6, we understand fulfillment to be the responsibility of the solution provider; however, as both the solution provider and servicer(s) will be responsible for initiation of communications, is it the expectation that the solution provider will absorb the full cost of mailing or is this cost directly billable to the Department?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible for standard mailing/fulfillment costs.
13	In response to the Information Submitted by Offerors (3.0), Narrative (1), can the FSA further clarify the definition and related parameters of "unlimited right to use?"	Unlimited right to use means that the Government or its agents do not pay ongoing costs to use the solution during or after the contract's period of performance.
14	Regarding Constraint 2, we assume the "unlimited right to use" is in effect only while the contract is valid. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	Incorrect. Unlimited right to use means that the Government or its agents do not pay ongoing costs to use the solution during or after the contract's period of performance.
15	Is it expected that the "enterprise complaint system" be delivered as part of the Servicing Solution and considered in scope for this effort?	No.

16	Can FSA confirm that FASS includes all sub-systems needed to service loans and grants? Examples of sub-systems include electronic document handling, emails from customers, emails to customers, IVR, outbound call dialers, lockbox/payment processing, and mail fulfillment. If not, can FSA clarify where these functions will reside?	The single servicing solution provider will need to provide a solution that meets all objectives/requirements in the solicitation. The examples provided would be the responsibility of the solution provider.
17	Can FSA confirm that the intent of High Level Requirement 14 is to have FASS execute Loan Consolidation?	Yes, the single servicing solution provider will originate consolidation loans.
18	We assume that borrowers will be assigned to specific customer service providers, can FSA confirm this assumption?	We do not anticipate assigning borrowers to specific customer service providers. Rather, it is expected that customer service contact center providers will have access to the entire portfolio of borrowers.
19	Please provide an estimated procurement schedule including the start of Phase II and the anticipated award date.	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
20	What is the timeline to have functionality in place for PSLF, TEACH, Title VII, default management and default collections and how much volume exists today?	Timeline for implementation of those functions (excluding Title VII, Perkins and default collections) will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor. FSA anticipates the implementation of some of the unique functionality may require up to 18 months post award. The default collections and Title VII servicing requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
21	Will the Department allow the offeror awarded this contract to subcontract or otherwise hire or work with other companies to provide some of the required services or is the entity selected supposed to provide all required services?	The offeror may use additional entities.

22	Will development and implementation of the single servicing solution affect the data availability, infrastructure and data formats supporting accounts placed with Private Collection Agencies?	Not at this time.
23	The solicitation implies an additional procurement in the future for the “multiple customer service providers”. When do you anticipate this additional procurement process to start?	Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation.
24	How will the multiple customer service providers function? Will they act as call centers only or will there be an opportunity to lease the system and service the loans as some of the federal servicers do today?	FSA anticipates the customer service contact center providers will function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their loans/grants primarily via incoming/outgoing contact support. Objectives/Requirements for any future procurement actions will be included in those actions.
25	What number of the multiple customer service providers do you anticipate to engage based on the expectation to exceed 40 million borrowers in the upcoming years?	Total number of customer service contact center providers has not been determined.
26	How quickly after the award do you anticipate to transfer the loans from the current federal servicers to the selected system? How will the transfer process work? Will FSA function in a one-servicer environment until the multiple customer service providers are selected, or will FSA continue working with the current servicers AND the newly selected system provider?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. The transfer process used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor. FSA anticipates current servicers to continue until all volumes have been transferred to the single solution provider's portfolio. The timeframe for a customer service contact center provider procurement action has not been determined.
27	Does the “providing access to account information” activity noted in the 1.2 Current Need section refer to access for FSA or borrower access?	The Statement of Objectives identifies requirements that may require account information to be made available to borrowers, FSA, and other FSA approved entities.

28	Does a single servicing solution also include a borrower facing self-service option? (Is the single web portal referenced in Attachment A part of the solicitation or is that something that FSA will provide?)	Yes.
29	Will the multiple customer service providers referenced be determined as part of Phase II? If not, when and how will they be selected?	The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service call center, financial reporting, etc. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation.
30	What is the expected turnaround time for deciding which providers will be eligible for Phase II submission?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
31	What is the expected date for release of the Phase II solicitation? (And will it be circulated to all existing servicers, even if they aren't participating in the solicitation process?)	Phase II solicitation will be released in the summer of 2016. Only offerors selected to participate in Phase II will receive the solicitation.
32	What is the status of the initial 8M borrowers transferred? (Is this a mix of borrowers in both In School/Grace and Repayment status?)	See Section 3, Information Submitted by Offerors, item # 5 of the solicitation.
33	What is the estimated timeline of contract award, as well as when the 8 million accounts would have to be on-boarded?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016. FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award.

34	Will there be specific business requirements that need to be met with this contract? For the purpose of responding to the solicitation, particularly with the estimated annual costs, is it safe to assume the same business requirements that are currently in place?	Offers to this solicitation should be based on information provided within this solicitation and include all aspects of servicing student loans and grants.
36	Regarding "Establish Common Servicing Practices", on top of Page 2, Attachment A, what areas of servicing are meant by this? Due diligence frequency, for example?	Servicing practices such as communications, branding, procedures, call scripts, etc are expected to be consistent in a single servicing solution.
37	What is the intent of the scope for consolidated reporting of financial information, borrower data, and other information consistent with Federal accounting and audit requirements?	FSA requires a single servicing solution to support consistency, common servicing and one that minimizes complexity and risk.
38	What does Phase II entail? Will there be additional solicitations aimed strictly at those wishing to service under the selected single solution?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected from Phase I. FSA anticipates future procurement action to implement additional customer service contact center providers.
39	Will there be subsequent solicitations to provide the opportunity to bid for servicing contracts?	FSA anticipates future procurement action to implement additional customer service contact providers.
40	Does the use of "Currently" indicate the intent to reduce the number of student loan servicers?	"Currently" indicates the current multi-servicer environment under which loans/grants are being serviced.

41	How many customer service providers does ED/FSA intend to use? Will those servicers support both Title IV and Title VII loans/grants? Does FSA already have the “customer service providers” contracted or will there be a separate RFP for the “customer service providers”?	The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
42	Is the intent to eliminate the use of specialized servicers such as for PSLF borrowers?	The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center.
43	Regarding the section specific to receiving and responding to inquiries from borrowers, how is this activity different from the activities FSA anticipates the customer service providers will be conducting?	The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
44	Would you be able to describe what types of counseling activities the Department is envisioning as a part of this RFP?	The single servicing solution provider will be expected to provide loan counseling activities for borrowers to assist borrowers in successfully managing their federal accounts and meeting the obligations required for their loans/grants. Entrance/Exit counseling are not expected as part of these servicing functions.

45	What is the timeline to select servicing solution providers to move to Phase 2?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
46	What is the timeline to award a single servicing solution provider?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
47	Under 1.2 "Current Need", it was stated that "Future procurement actions to implement multiple customer servicer provider environment will require the single solution provider to assist each new servicer", when will the servicer procurement/solicitation be posted on FedBiz?	Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation.
48	After award through year 2, what is the transfer schedule to move borrower accounts from other servicers to the new single servicing solution provider?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. The transfer process used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
49	Will existing TIVA and NFP servicers be awarded as prime contractors as customer service providers before any transfers occur to the new single servicing solution provider?	Objectives/Requirements for any future procurement actions will be included in those actions.
50	Will the EA27 file be updated before the transfers occur to the new servicing solution provider? For instance the EA27 file does not support the PAYE, REPAYE and permanent standard for ICR.	The transfer process used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
51	Will there be any past performance/volume constraints to be awarded as a customer service provider in the multi servicer environment?	Requirements for any future procurement actions will be included in those actions.

52	How does FSA envision the customer service provider to perform work using the servicing solution? For instance will each servicer perform all levels of servicing, some or only one of the servicing activities such as inbound/outbound calls, email processing, print/mail, financial reconciliation and reporting, correspondence and form processing, imaging, skip tracing etc.	The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
53	If a servicer is already using the awarded servicing solution to service Federal Borrower Accounts i.e. an NFP using Nelnet/PHEAA will the servicer need to transfer the servicing volume?	Ultimately, FSA anticipates all accounts will exist on the single servicing solution.
54	What will the scope of activities be for the "multiple customer service providers" referenced in the solicitation?	FSA anticipates the customer service contact center providers will function in capacity that will help borrowers manage their loans/grants primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
55	Does FSA envision the offeror under this bid supplying the customer service providers with all system functionality required for loan servicing functions or is there some system functionality the customer service provider will be expected to provide? Ex: Telephony Platform	FSA anticipates the offeror to provide access to the system and training/procedures on how to use it to assist end users, to include borrowers, FSA employees, etc. FSA is open to options on how the telephony platform is designed.
56	Please define what accounts are considered in default or default collections as those statuses are not currently reflected in the pricing table.	All borrowers greater than 30 days delinquent are included in the 'Delinquent' status percentage.

57	Are there functional servicing requirements specific to Title VII, which differ from servicing Title IV assets? If so, please provide additional detail on those requirements.	The work associated with servicing Title VII is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The Title VII servicing requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
58	Are there other grant types besides TEACH that are in scope for this procurement? If yes please provide additional detail on those grant types.	TEACH is the only type of grant.
59	Is the unlimited right to use the system limited to the effective contract period?	Unlimited right to use means that the Government or its agents do not pay ongoing costs to use the solution during or after the contract's period of performance.
60	Does a title page count towards the 10-page limit?	No.
61	Is FSA planning to host the system solution in their data center? If yes what is the expected timeline for the solution to be hosted by the government? Is the expectation this will occur immediately upon award?	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department.
62	Is FSA looking for a separate price assuming the government operates the data center or pricing assuming a data center operated by the solution provider? If the data center is operated by the government, please clarify what services and/or hardware the government hosting vendor will provide.	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department. The cost estimate should be consistent with the conceptual approach provided.
63	Section 1. Related to the statement "...support the management of Title IV and VII financial aid..." – please define what specific products are in-scope to be serviced.	Functions included within the Statement of Objectives (excluding Title VII, Perkins and default collections initially) should be provided by the offeror. The Title VII, Perkins and default collections may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
64	Section 1. Please define "post loan and grant disbursement".	This means after the loan/grant has been originated and sent from the origination system to the servicer to begin the servicing activities.

65	The solicitation states that the solution shall provide... collections activity. Is it the Government's intent for the awardee to perform all collections activity?	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
66	Is additional consideration made if offeror can demonstrate a servicing solution that exceeds FSA yearly requirements (Year 1- 8 million student loan borrowers, Year 2- 20 million student loan borrowers, Year 3- 35 million student loan borrowers)?	Selection for participation in Phase II is defined in the solicitation.
67	Understanding that Phase 1 submissions are to be received by May 9th, when will selected contractors be notified of their eligibility to participate in Phase II of the selection process?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
68	Will FSA provide offerors a breakdown of existing cost associated with systems that currently service borrowers?	No.
69	The cost table in section 3.0 only lists annual servicing costs associated with the different borrower segments. In addition to servicing borrowers, costs would also be incurred for data conversion, customer outreach, and communication activities. Should these costs also be factored into the overall servicing costs or would they be separate line items?	All estimated ongoing costs should be incorporated into the cost estimate.

70	<p>The solicitation document states that the potential contract could include not just servicing, but also loan discharge, loan consolidation, financial reporting, default management, and default collections. Given that there are other entities currently under contract with the Department to provide these other services:</p> <p>a. Is this solicitation intended to replace the current entities providing loan discharge, loan consolidation, financial reporting, default management or default collection services?</p> <p>b. If not, how would the contractor under this solicitation work with and/or coordinate with other providers under contract to provide the same or similar services?</p> <p>c. Since the private collection agency contract process has been delayed, is this solicitation intended to replace the collection solicitation process?</p>	<p>The solicitation is to acquire a single servicing solution provider to support the FSA portfolio on the single servicing solution. The need for some contracts will be diminished as volume is moved to the single servicing solution as a result of this award. This solicitation is not intended to replace the current collection solicitation.</p>
71	<p>The Department noted that the goal is to build a new state of the art loan servicing system that creates incentives and guidelines to create a more user-friendly online loan management platform. Yet the solicitation does not specify what those incentives or guidelines will be. Has the Department already decided on the incentives and guidelines for this contract? If so, is this information publicly available? If the information is already developed, how did the Department decide on the particular incentives and guidelines and which outside entities if any provided input?</p>	<p>The solicitation contains the statement of objectives in attachment A. Contract incentives will be developed in association with the contract award during Phase II.</p>
72	<p>Will there be only one entity awarded this contract?</p>	<p>FSA anticipates only one award as a result of this solicitation.</p>

73	The Department noted that this system will lay the foundation for forthcoming contract actions to acquire additional customer service centers. Please provide specific information about what this means in terms of future solicitations. How does the Department define “customer service centers”?	FSA anticipates the customer service contact center providers will function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their loans/grants primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Objectives/Requirements for any future procurement action will be included in those actions.
74	How many of the current Department servicers meet the volume specifications listed in the solicitation? Please name those servicers.	All non-default federal servicers currently use servicing systems with capacity to support 8 million student borrowers.
75	Under section 1.2, “current need”, you state that the specific activities required include compliance with all existing federal legislation, regulations and security standards. Would this “need” disqualify a company that has failed to comply with federal law and regulation previously? If so, over what time period will the Department review compliance?	The Government reserves the right to review any information available in reviewing past performance (e.g., PPIRS, publicly available, etc.). The selection will be made from among those offerors who receive a “Go” for selection factor (1), and demonstrate higher quality, relevant past performance and a more feasible and lower risk conceptual approach (selection factors (2) and (3)), with a cost estimate that is consistent with the conceptual approach (selection factor (4)). However, not every such offeror is guaranteed to be selected for Phase II.
76	Should no offerors be able to meet the volume amounts listed under 3.4, will the Department of Education readjust volume requirements of the offerors?	If no offers are received, ED will re-evaluate the solicitation and adjust or cancel as needed.
77	In Attachment A, Objectives, will the common servicing practices be developed into the student loan servicer manual? Will that be developed prior to the awarding of the contract, or simultaneously?	Detailed requirements will be incorporated into the contract. Common servicing practices may be developed both prior to and after award. Any new practices, requirements, regulations identified after award will be incorporated via post award modification.

78	Under this new system, will borrowers be able to determine who their servicer is if they want to file a complaint about their servicer via the Enterprise Complaint System? Or, will the Department do the work on the back end to match complainants with their servicers after receiving complaints?	There will be a single servicing solution so borrowers will not need to determine who their servicer is.
79	In point 14, providing Direct Loan consolidation services is listed as a high-level requirement. Does this mean that the Department intends to replace the current consolidation system that allows borrowers to select a servicer?	There will be a single servicing solution so borrowers will not need to select a servicer.
80	In Attachment A, High-level Requirements, point 15, would monitoring of income-driven repayment, PSLF, etc., tracking be provided electronically? Would this require borrowers certified into a program like PSLF be moved away from their current servicer?	Borrower account information (such as borrower account status, including their status in relation to IDR and/or PSLF forgiveness) is expected to be available to borrowers electronically once all requirements have been met. There will be a single servicing solution so borrowers will be moved onto the single servicing solution.
81	In Attachment A, High-level Requirements, point 15, would providing ongoing services require offerors to provide multi-specializations?	If 'multi-specializations' is intended as the ability to provide functions such as PSLF, TPD and income repayment plan forgiveness – Yes, the single servicing solution will be expected to provide all of that functionality.
82	Does FSA envision Customer Service Providers performing a number of specialized discrete operational activities, or will the Customer Service Provider perform the entire life-of-loan activities for a specific set of borrowers as they do today on their individual systems and assigned portfolios? Can FSA provide a more detailed definition of Customer Service Provider?	FSA anticipates the customer service contact center providers will function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their loans/grants primarily via incoming/outgoing contact support. Objectives/Requirements for any future procurement actions will be included in those actions.
83	What is the anticipated number range of customer service providers that will be using the Solution?	Total number of customer service contact center providers has not been determined.

84	Does FSA desire / require logical or physical data segregation for CSP's leveraging a single system?	All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution. It is expected that customer service contact center providers will have access to the entire portfolio of borrowers on the single servicing system. FSA anticipates incoming calls will be received at a single number and that the single servicer provider will provide the functionality to distribute those calls to multiple call centers.
85	Upon award, will the solution provider be required to perform all servicing operational functions until such time as multiple customer service provider functionality is implemented?	The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service call center, financial reporting, etc.
86	Does FSA envision the awardee performing all servicing operational functions to some degree in addition to multiple CSPs performing functions during the full contract term?	The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
87	In addition to providing support for customer service providers, will the solution provider awardee also be responsible, under FSA's direction, for oversight and guidance of customer service providers using the system?	The single servicing solution provider will be expected to provide support as shown in the Statement of Objectives (see high level requirements # 17).
88	The scope of the solicitation states the solution provider will need to perform default management and default collections activities. Are we correct in assuming this includes day 270 technical default to day 360 only, and not the activities currently performed by DMCS?	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.

89	Will FSA have several front ends (for the Web portal) depending on the user who is accessing?	FSA anticipates the single servicing solution will include a single web portal clearly labeled as representing the Department of Education through which all users can access information and manage loans/grants.
90	Will FSA integrate the process (i.e., establish common servicing practices) or will FSA seek process improvement consultants?	Detailed requirements will be incorporated into the contract.
91	Would FSA like full monitoring capabilities over the Servicers?	FSA anticipates the single servicing solution to support FSA to more effectively manage and oversee vendors' performance, leading to better outcomes for borrowers.
92	Will FSA provide a detailed work flow for loan counseling activities to assist borrowers in successfully managing their federal accounts?	The requested flow will not be provided as part of Phase I of this solicitation.
93	Is there an architectural diagram of how this platform (DMCS) is currently operating?	A DMCS architectural diagram will not be provided as part of Phase I of this solicitation.
94	Will the initial 8 million accounts be a mixture of all loans (in-school, grace, forbearance, deferment, etc.)?	See Section 3, Information Submitted by Offerors, item # 5 of the solicitation.
95	When does FSA expect to load accounts to the system and how many?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. The transfer process used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
96	In Attachment A – High Level Requirements #8, it states skip trace required. Is the government seeking a skip trace component that includes only borrower contact information or a more comprehensive solution including bankruptcy and deceased information, etc.?	Skip Trace activities must include, at a minimum, the ability to keep current updated contact information for account holders.

97	In Attachment A – High Level Requirements #8, it states skip trace required. Is the government seeking a small-scale simple data source or should the solution include a comprehensive systemic approach to accumulating and managing borrower data?	Skip Trace activities must include the ability to keep current updated contact information for account holders.
98	In Attachment A – High level Requirements #8 it states skip trace required. Is the government seeking a comprehensive skip trace network that allows all outsourced agencies to share in disposition data?	The skip trace data should be available to all service providers.
99	Does FSA want to include the system to process the Default Portfolio in the same manner as the current DMCS with the borrower data all in one database?	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
100	Will all PCA's begin to use the new FASS system?	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
101	When will detailed requirements for the new FASS be ready for the procurement process?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the selected vendors will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
102	How should potential offerors reflect the estimated cost of "Default" status when it was not included within the chart?	All borrowers greater than 30 days delinquent are included in the 'Delinquent' status percentage.
103	How will the enterprise complaint system and FASS be related or interface with each other?	The single servicing solution vendor will be required to support FSA's enterprise complaint system and respond to all inquiries received.

104	Does FSA expect all borrower data to be in one database or can a two system solution work together with separate databases be an acceptable approach?	FSA requires a single servicing solution to support consistency, common servicing and one that minimizes complexity and risk.”
105	Does FSA plan to create the consistent processes and practice, or will the new contractor have this responsibility?	FSA will initially determine the common processes and how they will work within the requirements of the contact.
106	How does FSA see the processes, call scripts, and procedures being supported by or integrated with FASS?	The single servicing solution vendor will be required to provide support in the creation of those functions as well as provide training for the additional customer service contact center providers.
107	Does FSA want to include SMS/Text messaging and webchat as a communication channel in this solicitation?	Yes.
108	What is FSA’s rule for the system to utilize electronic signatures in processing deferments, repayment plan changes, etc.	FSA anticipates the single servicing solution will accept electronically signed forms from borrowers/recipients. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
109	What collection activities does FSA anticipate will be supported by DMCS vs. the new FASS?	The single servicing solution provider should expect to provide all servicing activities including collecting money for the payment of loans. The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.

110	Does FSA envision the same entities will perform both loan servicing and collection activities? Or, will these be kept as distinct processes performed by different groups or contractors?	The single servicing solution provider should expect to provide all servicing activities including collecting money for the payment of loans. The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
111	What mediums does FSA expect to be used when providing fulfillment services?	FSA would expect postal mail, electronic mail, and text messaging.
112	When will FSA outline functional requirements for operational monitoring, compliance reviews, operational audits, technical audits, and access to all needed data, information, and personnel offeror's?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
113	How will the current DMCS processes in the collection process differ from the new FASS?	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
114	How many customer service providers is expected for the new FASS to support at contract award, 1 year from contract, 2 years from contract, and 3 years from contract award?	Total number of customer service contact center providers has not been determined.
115	How will the ongoing performance of the solution provider be evaluated?	Performance evaluation will be determined as part of the award process.
116	How will the Department evaluate the service providers? What information is needed from the solution provider to aid in this evaluation?	Performance evaluation will be determined as part of the award process.
117	Can a solution provider also contract with the Department as a service provider?	The awardee of this procurement will be providing customer service and would therefore not need to participate in the future procurement activities discussed in section 1.2 of the solicitation.

118	Referenced in Attachment A, High-level Requirement 13.e, is it reasonable to assume there an opportunity for the solution provider to build and propose a transfer schedule?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. The transfer schedule will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
119	As decommissioned servicers are expected to provide continued system support for a minimum of 90 days from last transfer in the existing TIVAS contract, is it a reasonable assumption that the decommissioned servicers be responsible for remediating data issues/errors associated with the newly converted loan volume during the transfer process?	All sending servicers are required to work with receiving servicers to resolve data issues during transfers.
120	Will the solution provider receive inactive records from the current platform providers? What would be the expectation for interaction with and/or storage of those records?	The single servicing solution will need to accept/manage closed/inactive loan information. The single servicing solution will need to be able to support adjustments to previously closed loans/grants as well as ongoing servicing of those loans/grants when needed.
121	Will the solution provider contract directly with the service providers?	Total number of customer service contact center providers and the methodology for contracting with those entities has not been determined.
122	Who will determine what and how integration points will be addressed between FSA, solution provider and servicers (e.g. telephony infrastructure, facilities, data transfer/storage, locations of processing capacity, printing/mailing, etc.)?	FSA will coordinate with all vendors to integrate as needed. Integration will be dependent on the solution selected.
123	In relationship to contract begin, when can service providers be expected and ready for onboarding? Is the expectation that the solution provider support continual on and off-boarding of service providers?	Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation. The single servicing solution provider will be expected to onboard and offboard the multiple customer service providers as necessary.

124	What responsibilities for servicer readiness will the solution provider have to provide to support on and off-boarding of new servicers?	The single servicing solution provider will be expected to support the onboarding and offboarding of the multiple customer service providers as necessary.
125	What will be the solution provider's responsibility with regards to access and security for the servicers? For example, will the solution provider be responsible for ensuring physical and data security of the servicers, or will the solution provider responsibility end at the boundaries of the system?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible to obtain authority to operate (ATO) related to the single servicing solution system, facilities, and related activities. FSA anticipates future customer servicer contact center vendors to be responsible for maintaining their own security obligations.
126	What is the anticipated number of servicers that will access the solution?	Total number of customer service contact center providers has not been determined.
127	Objectives in Attachment A, includes the following statement: "FSA will create a single web portal clearly labeled as representing the Department of Education". Are we to assume that this is the solution provider's responsibly under this contract?	Yes.
128	Are the functions currently available through StudentLoans.gov (e.g. DLCO and IDR applications, Entrance and Exit Counseling services) expected to be provided through the new single web portal?	Not initially, but all servicing functions are within the overall scope of this contract.
129	Referenced in Attachment A, High-level Requirement 13.e, please confirm that the solution provider is expected to support all Default Collection activities.	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
130	Is the Department planning to provide the solution provider with more effective and higher capacity interfaces to Department borrower data currently housed in other federal systems (e.g. IRS, NSLDS, COD, DOD, StudentLoans.gov)?	Interfaces with the listed federal systems will continue to function in an as is capacity or with minimal initial improvements. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.

131	Will the Department offer the solution provider more effective and higher capacity interfaces to account holder data currently housed in other federal systems (e.g. IRS, NSLDS, COD, DOD, StudentLoans.gov)?	Interfaces with the listed federal systems will continue to function in an as is capacity or with minimal initial improvements. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
132	Who will govern the Change Management process? (e.g. prioritization, scheduling, release management, etc.)	FSA will determine the overall priorities and scheduling in coordination with vendors and other necessary parties. The offeror will be expected to support the process and FSA. FSA will participate in all aspects of the solution provider's changes to the single servicing solution, including any systematic/operations changes. This may include requirements, design, test execution/review.
133	Will the solution provider be expected to enforce common policies, procedures, processes, governance and controls across all supporting service providers or will that be the role of the Department? For example, will the solution provider be expected to conduct operational processing monitoring of the servicers?	The single servicing solution provider will not be expected to enforce requirements with other vendors contracted with FSA, but the provider will be expected to provide support to FSA as needed.
134	Will the solution provider be expected to perform and respond to all financial and control related audit requests, and coordinate the responses with the supporting service providers?	The single servicing solution provider be expected to perform and respond to all financial and control related audit requests, and coordinate with any other parties necessary.
135	Will the solution provider perform all financial reconciliations and be responsible for working with the supporting servicer providers to resolve variances?	The single servicing solution provider will be expected to perform all financial reconciliations, and coordinate with any other parties necessary.
136	Is there an expectation of the solution provider to perform servicer-level account holder support as a contingency servicer?	All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution.

137	Will the Department provide detailed requirements on disaster recovery and business continuity needs? For example, what must be put in place prior to go-live or at go-live (mirrored, hot sites, etc.)?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
138	Referenced in Attachment A, under Constraints, what level of system documentation is required? For example, is the solution provider expected to provide object code or source code?	Documentation shall contain detailed data to sufficiently allow FSA, or and FSA selected vendor(s), to operate and maintain the servicing solution in its entirety.
139	What service-level agreements will be required for the solution environment regarding downtime/uptime, performance, hours of operation, etc.?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
140	Are there restrictions regarding where processing/data storage may occur (hosted/cloud/etc., FSA/platform provider/servicer/etc.)?	Restrictions are in place that would require the contractor to comply with the requirements of the Federal Information Security Act (FISMA), the Privacy Act of 1974, and applicable Special Publications (SP) 800 Series documents published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and applicable Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS).
141	Will the Department, if hosting the solution, be responsible for emergency fixes?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible for operating and maintaining the solution in coordination with FSA.
142	Will the Department, if hosting the solution, be hosting all environments (prod, development, test, quality, stress)?	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department. Details of hosting solutions would need to be identified in proposals.
143	Will the Department, if hosting the solution, assume responsibility for all patch management and upgrades (operating system, infrastructure, third party software)?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible for operating and maintaining the solution in coordination with FSA.

144	What components should the solution provider consider as part of the cost structure (hardware, software fees, development tools, data storage, telecommunications, software development/enhancements, infrastructure upgrades, help desk, disaster recovery, etc.)?	All costs associated with operating and maintaining the solution should be included in the cost estimate, as well as the assumptions made in developing that cost estimate.
145	In reference to 2.1 Selection Factors, (1), How will "solution availability and capability" be measured? What metrics or evidence is required?	This factor will be reviewed on a Go/No Go Basis. The offeror must demonstrate that it can provide a servicing system that is clearly capable of supporting at least 8 million student borrowers immediately upon award, at least 20 million borrowers within two years, and at least 35 million borrowers within three years. The offeror must submit a narrative that demonstrates the offeror's ability to provide the Government with an unlimited right to use, via sale or license, a servicing solution that is clearly capable of supporting at least 8 million student borrowers immediately upon award, at least 20 million borrowers within two years, and at least 35 million borrowers within three years.
146	What will be the scope of the Phase 2 solicitation (finalization of solution provider based on short list, solicitation to remain/become a service provider, furnishing of detailed requirements, etc.)?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II. FSA anticipates Phase II will result in an award to a single servicing solution vendor. FSA anticipates future procurement action to implement additional customer service contact center providers.
147	What will be the timeline of the Phase 1 decisioning and Phase 2 solicitation?	Once all proposals have been reviewed the vendors selected to participate in Phase II will be notified via FBO.gov. Notification is anticipated in June 2016. FSA anticipates the award prior to the end of calendar year 2016.
148	Does the Department of Education have a preference towards a cloud or on premise solution?	FSA is open to solutions that will meet all requirements and are compliant with all security requirements.

149	Are there geographic restrictions on where servicing data can be held?	Must be within the United States and its territories and possessions.
150	Does the Department of Education have a preference between open source and commercial source software technology?	There is not a preference.
151	Does the Department of Education have estimates for number of concurrent users on the system?	Estimates are not available at this time.
152	In regards to #4 in High-level requirements, what are the hours of operations the government is expecting for the vendor to provide services to respond to inquiries?	FSA has not yet identified specific hours of operation, but the offeror should anticipate at least Monday to Saturday operations for call center services offering borrowers in all time zones availability, and virtually 24/7 operation for self-service options.
153	In regards to #6 in High-level Requirements, what is the scope of counseling activities the Government is expecting?	FSA expects the offeror to assist federal account holders with satisfactorily meeting all obligations on loans/grants. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
154	Will there be dedicated resources within Department of Education for requirements gathering and validation?	Yes.
155	Are there US citizenship requirements for individuals to work on this project?	Offerors should review the Administrative Communications System (ACS) Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy (OCIO-01), as referenced in the solicitation.
156	Does the Department of Education have preference for an agile or a traditional SDLC methodology for building and rolling out this solution?	FSA does not have a preference. FSA is interested in using the methodology that provides the best results.
157	Does the Department of Education have a specific date for the first release?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award.

158	Does the Department of Education anticipate all functionally be rolled out in the first release?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. FSA anticipates the implementation of some of the unique functionality may require up to 18 months post award.
159	Who will conduct user acceptance testing?	The offeror will conduct user acceptance testing. FSA will execute, review and approve user testing to the extent needed to support successful implementation.
160	In regards to “Establish Common Servicing Practices” has the Department of Education identified which set of processes and procedures borrowers will have access to or is it within the scope of this contract for the vendor to define these processes and procedures?	FSA will initially determine the common processes and how they will work within the requirements of the contract. The single servicing solution vendor will support the requirements. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.
161	Can you please provide additional information on the new operating model once the solution goes live? Will the Department of Education charge servicers for the use of this new technology solution? Will servicers gain administrative rights to the solution? Will all customer inquiries be routed from the awarded vendor and to the other servicers?	All federal accounts will be moved to, and remain on, a single servicing solution. The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action. FSA anticipates incoming calls will be received at a single number and that the single servicing solution provider will provide the functionality to distribute those calls to multiple contact centers.
162	Will FSA consider a commercially available web-based system that is integrated as part of a servicing solution or will FSA require a fully custom-built solution for online single portal access?	The offeror should propose solutions that can achieve the objectives of the solicitation.

163	We looked through the requirements and our software provides all the specified desired functionality, but is the FSA looking for a software solution or for an agency to actually service these accounts?	The solicitation is for a single solution provider that will meet all high level requirements included within the Statement of Objectives. The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service call center, financial reporting, etc.
164	If the FSA is indeed looking for a software solution, how many named user licenses would need to be acquired?	Estimates are not available at this time.
165	Can an existing FSA portfolio, currently serviced and maintained on the selected system remain in the current database with current account activity or will all accounts serviced under this contract be required to be “converted” to the selected system?	FSA would consider allowing an existing portfolio on the selected solution to remain if it met all other requirements, including security requirements. All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution.
166	2. Page 4, Section 3.0, item 6; “Conversion is defined as the successful movement of all current and prior account information for borrower student loans/grants from one servicing system to a new or different servicing system”. Is this statement intended to mean that prior servicing activity is to be converted (loaded) onto the selected system and that prior account activity is “live data” that can be viewed, revised, adjusted and serviced as if the account was initially placed on the system at time of disbursement? To convert prior system data to a new loan servicing system and to enable that data to be serviced on the new system is time consuming, costly and often impractical given servicing system differences. Please clarify the intended goal for account conversion.	FSA anticipates the conversion may result in the servicing history/information details from prior to conversion being stored in an imaging record.

167	<p>Page 2, Section 2.1, item 1; Minimum borrower counts are provided for year 1, 2 and 3; can FSA provide estimates for potential maximum borrower counts for the same periods? The maximum estimates help understand the potential conversion volume that may need to be managed and accommodated.</p>	<p>As of October 1, 2014, FSA's servicing portfolio included over \$765 billion in outstanding loans and nearly 30 million student and parent borrowers. The portfolio is expected to exceed 40 million borrowers and \$1 trillion in the upcoming years, and continue to grow.</p>
168	<p>Attachment A: Statement of Objectives, page 2 High Level Requirements, items 6, 7 and 8; Please clarify if FSA is seeking a servicing system solution or a system solution combined with the selected contractor providing and performing?</p> <p>a. Item 6 states: "Provide loan counseling activities for borrowers to assist borrowers.....for their loans/grants". Please clarify if the servicing system it to support these activities (functionality is built into the system) or the contractor is to have staff to execute these activities using the system.</p> <p>b. Item 7 states: "Provide services for intake, review, and response to requests.....discharges, forgiveness, and bankruptcy". Please clarify if the servicing system it to support these activities (functionality is built into the system) or the contractor is to have staff to execute these activities using the system.</p> <p>c. Item 8 states: "Provide due diligence, skip trace.....and collections activity required for all federal student loans/grants". Please clarify if the servicing system it to support these activities (functionality is built into the system) or the contractor is to have staff to execute these activities using the system.</p> <p>The reference to supporting a multiple customer service provider environment can be interpreted as customer service activities would be performed by another contractor.</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider is expected to provide both a system and staff to complete the activities described.</p>

169	<p>FSA is seeking efficiency and effectiveness improvements in this contract, and cites several expected areas of improvement. However, automation of business processes for improved operational performance and accuracy were not among the stated objectives. The level of automation has a direct bearing on the staffing levels and cost to operate (from an Operations perspective). How does FSA intend to weigh the value of a solution with higher levels of automation that require fewer people to operate versus a less automated approach that may require more people to operate?</p>	<p>The selection factors have been identified in the solicitation.</p>
170	<p>Regarding Requirement 10, can FSA confirm that postage will be provided as GFE? Can FSA confirm that printing costs can be charged as ODCs? How many pages and mail packages should we assume per borrower per month? What percent of correspondence is sent via email?</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider will be responsible for standard mailing and all fulfillment costs. Volume of pages mailed per borrower per month are not available with Phase I. Over 50% of borrowers elect to have electronic correspondence.</p>
171	<p>In the current TIVAS contract administration FSA allocates the loans to be serviced across all of the loan servicing contractors. FSA also adjudicates the performance of each loan servicing contractor against contract performance success metrics. Will FSA continue to allocate loans across all of the incumbent TIVAS during migration to the new loan servicing contract? Can FSA share a timeline and pro rata formula for that allocation that can be shared with the incumbent contractors?</p>	<p>Once the servicing solution is operational, new borrowers will be serviced by that solution.</p>
172	<p>How will FSA govern contractor performance against success operational metrics for the new contract/contractor?</p>	<p>Performance evaluation will be determined as part of the award process.</p>

173	We understand Selection Factor #1 to mean that the offeror's solution must be a single servicing system capable of handling 8 million student borrowers. Please confirm that this understanding is correct.	The offeror must demonstrate that it can provide a servicing system that is clearly capable of supporting at least 8 million student borrowers immediately upon award, at least 20 million borrowers within two years, and at least 35 million borrowers within three years.
174	Regarding Section 6, will functional requirements, related documentation, or even the system itself, for the current Grants Servicing solution be available to leverage as part of incorporating functionality into the single servicing solution?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II. The current system is not expected to be provided by FSA for offerors to use.
175	Regarding Requirement 20, will the tracking and reporting of background check status be done through e-QIP, or does FSA prefer that another parallel system be developed?	FSA anticipates background checks will be done via the method used at time of award (currently e-QIP is used).
176	Regarding Constraint 4, if the hosting of the single platform is at a Government data center, will all or some of the NIST SP 800-53 controls be provided and managed by FSA as a set of "shared" data center controls? Would those shared controls be managed via a General Support System that the servicing system will interface with via an ISA? Examples might include most of the IR and PE families, and at least parts of AC, AT, CP, and SC.	All costs associated with the proposed solution, including hosting of the system, should be included in the cost estimate, as well as the assumptions made in developing that cost estimate.
177	Regarding Requirement 16, is the expectation that user security administration for users from the winning contractor and from the customer service providers, be performed by FSA, by the contractor, or be decentralized to the customer service providers?	After FSA approval for access is provided, system access administration is expected from the solution provider for all access to the servicing system.
178	Is FSA ID a requirement for borrower/end-user authentication?	FSA expects the FSA ID will be used by borrowers to access account information.

179	In Section 1.0, Please confirm that, for the requirements around default collections and default management, default is defined as 271 days delinquent. Also, please confirm that all existing DMCS functionality will remain in place as it is today.	The work typically associated with default collections (currently 360+ delinquent) is within scope of this procurement, but will not be expected at the onset of the award. The default collections requirements may be defined and implemented as a post award modification.
180	How many total FSA staff and FSA contractors (including Multiple Service Provider staff members) will need on-line access for each anticipated tier of borrower volume, i.e., immediately (to support 8 million borrowers), in two years (supporting 20 million), and in three years (supporting 30-35 million)?	Estimates are not available at this time.
181	"Services" are used extensively throughout the RFP. Is this a word being used to define a function or capability or is the expectation that a standardized data interface service be provided that other systems can connect to in order to execute that activity?	"Services" has been used to define functionality to be provided, not as a term referring to a standardized data interface.
182	We assume that the multiple service providers will be assigned like today, where a borrower's account is assigned to a service for the life of the loan versus borrowers moving from servicer to servicer for functionally assigned servicing (like TPD, delinquency, etc). Can FSA confirm this assumption?	All federal accounts will be moved to, and remain on, a single servicing solution. The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service contact center providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action. FSA anticipates incoming calls will be received at a single number and that the single servicing solution provider will provide the functionality to distribute those calls to multiple contact centers.

183	Is the intent that the solution provider provides all technology or will individual servicers be able to implement their own “off-system” solutions as part of servicing?	FSA anticipates the offeror to provide access to the system and training/procedures on how to use it to assist borrowers. FSA is open to options on how much technology/infrastructure is provided to support customer service contact center providers.
184	What is the estimated timeframe for starting and finishing the overall conversion to the single platform solution? How many different entities would be converting customers onto the single platform? Also, is there an assumed, preferred, or required sequence of what loan or grant products get converted? We assume FSA intends to begin with Direct Loans and then move on to other asset classes. Can FSA confirm this assumption? If not, what is FSA's preferred approach?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. The transfer schedule will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor. FSA anticipates the implementation of some of the unique functionality may require up to 18 months post award. The transfer schedule used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
185	We assume that FSA's expectation is that the data conversions will proceed in a servicer by servicer manner and, within each servicer, will proceed by asset class and each asset class will be broken into manageable volumes of customers (i.e., loans first, grants next, etc). Can FSA confirm this wave based conversion assumption vs. an approach that would have all volume of a particular servicer converted all at one time?	The conversion/transfer process used will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
186	Please define requirements for new solution with respect to data retention policies. Is Contractor expected to archive any and all information indefinitely (to include customer correspondence, call recordings, loan documents, customer emails, etc.)?	The single servicing solution will need to accept/manage closed/inactive loan information. The single servicing solution will need to be able to support adjustments to previously closed loans/grants as well as ongoing servicing of those loans/grants when needed.

187	FSA requires an offeror to 'demonstrate that it can provide a servicing system that is clearly capable of supporting at least 8 million student borrowers immediately upon award'. We assume the most effective way to demonstrate this is for an offeror to document that they currently service at least 8 million student loan borrowers on their current system. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	The offeror should provide a narrative that demonstrates the offeror's ability to provide the Government with an unlimited right to use, via sale or license, a servicing solution that is clearly capable of supporting at least 8 million student borrowers immediately upon award.
188	Please define "high quality" customer service support.	FSA expects the offeror to meet the customers' needs consistently while adhering to all objectives/requirements in the solicitation.
189	We understand that the FASS provider must produce and maintain documentation for business operation procedures and training. What will FSA's role be in the evolution, maintenance and approval of the documents?	All procedures and training will be reviewed and approved by FSA.
190	We assume there will be 6 multiple servicers to service the end-state volume of 35 million borrowers. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	All federal accounts will be moved to, and remain on, a single servicing system.
191	Regarding the conversion of "current and prior account information", does this include all Paid-In-Full, Charged Off, or otherwise inactive accounts? If not, should we assume the legacy servicers will be required to maintain this information throughout the legal retention period?	The single servicing solution will need to accept/manage closed/inactive loan information. The single servicing solution will need to be able to support adjustments to previously closed loans/grants as well as ongoing servicing of those loans/grants when needed. Information will need to be retained by the single servicing solution provider throughout the contract period.

192	Regarding the conversion of "current and prior account information", is scope limited to core loan/account data? Or does this include all supporting documentation such as scanned/imaged documents, correspondence, phone call recordings, processing notes/memos etc? Will account history be transferred as images or in a format that can be processed by the single system?	The single servicing solution will need to accept/manage closed/inactive loan information. The single servicing solution will need to be able to support adjustments to previously closed loans/grants as well as ongoing servicing of those loans/grants when needed. This information may include history documents, scanned images, electronic loan data and more. FSA anticipates servicing histories will be provided in current image formats (non-proprietary formats).
193	To achieve the 'Improved Servicer Oversight' objective, we assume that the use of modern, commercially available capabilities like (a) near real-time operational performance dashboards for current performance of business operations and (b) speech analytics of phones with borrowers to ensure (i.e., audit) that servicer representatives are following standard call scripts will be required. Please confirm our understanding is the requirement.	The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.
194	Data Visualization is proving to be a positive disruptive capability in the Business Intelligence and Analytics technology market. To achieve the improved Data Collection / Analysis objective of creating a consolidated portfolio view to more easily analyze borrower, loan portfolio, and servicers' performance, we assume that the use of modern, commercially available Data Visualization capabilities will be required in order to enable the FSA to easily, and in a self-service fashion where desired, interact with information and views for these respective areas of performance to identify patterns and trends. Please confirm our understanding is the requirement.	The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.

195	<p>To meet the objectives outlined regarding simplifying and improving the customer experience of the borrowers, we assume the following are requirements for the inbound voice (i.e., phone) customer channel. The Contractor will provide a single IVR solution as part of the Single Platform that receives all inbound phone calls going to one Toll Free Number that is uniquely tied to the Department of Education for servicing purposes, and that will retrieve account information for all borrowers regardless of who services them. Additionally, because vendor-provided telephony technology has evolved to support (a) Scheduled Callback for times convenient for a borrower and (b) Virtual Assistant capabilities powered by natural language processing (i.e., conversing with the IVR), we assume that incorporating such functionality to maximize the borrower experience will be expected. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement. Frequently customers refuse to identify themselves in the IVR. Will it be the department's requirement that these customers must authenticate and identify themselves before receiving service or will unauthenticated borrowers receive telephone service? If unauthenticated borrowers will receive service, should the contractor include the cost of handling those calls in the pricing proposal?</p>	<p>The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.</p>
196	<p>To meet the objectives outlined regarding simplifying and improving the customer experience of the borrowers, we assume the following are requirements for the outbound voice (i.e., dialing out to a borrower's phone) customer channel. The Contractor will provide a single Dialer solution as part of the Single Platform that enables all outbound phone calls to borrowers to appear to come from one Toll Free Number, tied to Department of Education for Caller ID, and be responsible for the capability enabling the building and executing the dialing campaigns. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement.</p>	<p>The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.</p>

197	<p>To meet the objectives outlined regarding simplifying and improving the customer experience of the borrowers, we assume the following are requirements for the inbound email (i.e., phone) customer channel. The Contractor will provide a single email solution as part of the Single Platform that receives all inbound emails going to one email address, labelled as Department of Education, and will route automatically to the appropriate servicer of the borrower for response. Additionally, because vendor-provided technology has evolved to support automation (e.g., replies, acknowledgements), we assume that incorporating such functionality to maximize the borrower experience will be expected. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement. Please confirm if it is the Department's expectation that labor to identify and route emails that cannot be identified systemically should be included in the Contractors price? Will the Department expect all emails to be acknowledged or just emails that originate from the Contractor's online servicing system?</p>	<p>The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.</p>
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198	<p>To meet the objectives outlined regarding simplifying and improving the customer experience of the borrowers, we assume the following are requirements for the inbound postal mail (i.e., letter) customer channel. The Contractor will provide a single postal mail “ingestion” solution as part of the Single Platform that allows a single servicer to scan the contents of the opened correspondence, index, and route the digitized correspondence to the appropriate servicer supporting the account of the borrower who sent the mail. All postal mail will go to one postal address, labelled as Department of Education. Additionally, to ensure the borrower is staying informed, the solution will send automated email updates to borrowers at key, defined points in the operational workflow defined by the business process. We assume that incorporating such functionality to maximize the borrower experience will be expected. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement. Please confirm if it is the Department’s expectation that labor to perform this function should be included in the Contractors price?</p>	<p>The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.</p>
199	<p>By moving to a Single Platform for servicing there is a significant opportunity to simplify the points of integration with the various systems “upstream” (e.g., COD) and “downstream” (e.g., FMS) to and from the many servicing platforms today (for Direct Loans and other asset types). To achieve the efficiency and effectiveness outlined by the Department in RFP, we assume that the Contractor will receive and create a consolidated file for each of these respective systems that interface via batch file processing with the servicing platform in order to reduce the complexity and overhead on these upstream and downstream systems. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement.</p>	<p>The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.</p>

200	We assume that the Multiple Service Providers are required to provide their own internal network, desktop, telephony environment, printers, scanners, outgoing mail equipment for ad hoc letters, etc. Can FSA confirm that the scope of FASS ends at the outer wall of our facility?	FSA anticipates the offeror to provide access to the system and training/procedures on how to use it to assist borrowers. FSA is open to options on how much technology/infrastructure is provided to support customer service contact center providers.
201	Who will be responsible for addressing variances or anomalies with financial reporting, customer account data, and so on – will this be a centralized function supported by the single servicing system provider or each customer service provider?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible for the types of items described.
202	We assume that FSA would restrict the ability of the multiple service providers to take the FASS data into another environment to provide customer service.	The single servicing solution shall allow for all information to exist in one portfolio. FSA does not anticipate allowing data to be moved to other environments at customer service contact center providers.
203	We assume that the multiple service providers will conduct all customer service work directly on the FASS given the emphasis on common practices and processes. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	Yes, to the maximum extent possible.
204	The RFP mentions providing a web site for borrowers, and we assume there will also be a requirement to provide a web site for schools and other institutional stakeholders. Additionally, we assume that to mean the Contractor will build a single web site for schools and institutions, with one web address (i.e., URL), that all such users regardless of who services the accounts will go to. Moreover, we assume that this single portal or web site will need to be responsively designed in order to render optimally on PCs, Tablets, and Smartphones. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement.	The offeror should base the offer on the information provided in the solicitation, and include all assumptions.

205	<p>"FSA will create a single web portal." We assume that to mean the Contractor will build a single web site for borrowers, with one web address (i.e., URL), that all borrowers regardless of who services their loans will go to. Moreover, we assume that this single portal or web site will need to be responsively designed in order to render optimally on PCs, Tablets, and Smartphones. Please confirm that our understanding is the requirement.</p>	<p>FSA anticipates the single servicing solution will include a single web portal clearly labeled as representing the Department of Education through which all users can access information and manage loans/grants.</p>
206	<p>"Single set of consistent processes and practices." Can FSA confirm that the system to house these processes and practices is within the scope of FASS?</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider will be the centralized location for the processes and practices.</p>
207	<p>Can FSA confirm that creating call scripts for the multiple service providers is within the scope of the FASS solution?</p>	<p>Call scripts will need to be created as part of the common servicing practices.</p>
208	<p>Can FSA confirm FSA personnel will be running their own queries/analysis? Does FSA anticipate the vendor to do that based on ad hoc requests?</p>	<p>FSA expects the solution provider to comply with any and all requests for reports, data and information. FSA anticipates both the solution provider and FSA will initiate queries.</p>
209	<p>Will the Department be approving all borrower contact scripts, letters and forms?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
210	<p>What are the high level requirements for the "enterprise complaint system" as referenced in the Statement of Objectives?</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider should expect to respond to all servicing-related complaints FSA receives via the enterprise complaint system.</p>
211	<p>Will functional requirements, related documentation, or even the system itself, for the current Work-Study Program Servicing solution be available to leverage as part of incorporating functionally into the single servicing solution?</p>	<p>Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II. The current system for work-study is not expected to be provided by FSA for offerors to use.</p>

212	<p>Requirement 1 envisions this solution supporting multiple service providers. Today's current model has individual TIVAS / NFP servicers providing all aspects of servicing (call center, form processing, payment processing, collection, etc.) to a customer from the time the loan is originated on COD until the loan is repaid. Please confirm that volume on the new single solution will be segmented with individual portfolios for each of the multiple service providers in the same fashion it is today. Will there be any specialized operational work performed by a multiple servicer that will require that servicer to access customer information across more than one of the portfolios. For example, will there be a centralized complaint management servicer that is charged with dispositioning complaints associated with all of the multiple service providers? For example, will there be a central FSA correspondence management system with dispositioning all communications for all channels associated with all of the multiple service providers?</p>	<p>All federal accounts will be moved to, and remain on, a single servicing solution. The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions including a customer service contact center. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, may be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.</p> <p>FSA anticipates incoming calls will be received at a single number and that the single servicing solution provider will provide the functionality to distribute those calls to multiple contact centers. Email and chat may also require distribution to multiple contact centers.</p>
213	<p>Regarding Requirement 2, "Meet all security, storage, transaction processing, reporting, operational, and interface needs to support the servicing of the federal portfolio." Is there a comprehensive list of these items?</p>	<p>Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.</p>
214	<p>Regarding requirement 2, does the solution have to provide the ability to direct the inquiries or "provide services (labor) to receive and respond to inquiries"?</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions, including responding to inquiries.</p>
215	<p>Regarding Requirement 5, "Provide account information to federal account holders via websites, phone services, and mobile applications." Can FSA confirm that these phone services are IVR-based and not live agents?</p>	<p>The single servicing solution provider will provide all servicing functions, including responding to inquiries via live agents.</p>

216	Does the system scope include the websites, phone applications and mobile apps referenced in Requirements 5? Is the new system developer responsible for creating these websites, phone applications and mobile apps?	The solicitation is for a single solution provider that will meet all high level requirements included within the Statement of Objectives. The requirements for this solicitation include all elements needed to provide loan servicing functions including, but not limited to, system processing, fulfillment, customer service contact center, financial reporting, etc.
217	How far ahead of the onboarding for each asset class (loans, grants, etc.) will the FASS provider receive the list of customers to convert and the conversion timing? What is the planned cadence of conversion notifications that will be sent to the customer informing them of changes to their account and new customer experience?	The transfer process used & schedule will be determined in coordination with the awarded vendor.
218	High level requirement #5 states "...websites, phone services, and mobile applications..." a. What is the Government's definition of a "phone service"? b. What is the Government definition of a "mobile application"?	Phone service includes at a minimum the ability to provide account information via IVRU and live agents and respond to inquiries during incoming/outgoing calls. Mobile application is defined as the ability for users to access information while using smartphone, tablet, or similar device and having an experience similar to when using a website.
219	How far ahead of 1st day of Operation would the contractor be expected to demonstrate a fully functional system? Would that system have to support all identified asset classes and special programs like TPD and PSLF on day 1?	FSA expects the offeror to support 8 million borrowers on award. FSA anticipates the implementation of some of the unique functionality may require up to 18 months post award.
220	"Provide loan counselling activities..." Can FSA confirm that this reference is a reference to on-line tools for this function and not live agents? Can FSA clarify when in the loan lifecycle this counselling takes place?	Loan counseling to assist borrowers in successfully managing accounts is NOT only an on-line tool. Counseling should continue throughout the life of the account. Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II.

221	Requirement 7 refers to the ability to intake, review and respond to many loan activities. Can the government confirm that this requirement refers to web-based tools and other workflow to support these functions and not the labor to perform these functions?	Services for intake, review, and response to requests are NOT limited to only web-based tools.
222	Can the government confirm that the skip trace described is skip trace tools, not the manual labor to perform the skip tracing activities?	Skip trace activities are not limited to only tools. They also include completion of the skip trace activity.
223	Regarding Requirement 8, "Provide due diligence, skip trace, credit reporting and collections activity required for all federal student loans/grants." Will the system send information to the Credit Reporting Agencies and if so, which of the credit reporting agencies?	The single servicing solution provider will be required to report all major credit agencies.
224	Regarding Requirement 9, Is it envisioned that the submitting organization will need to conform to a standard transfer protocol? Will FSA provide a List of entities servicing grants?	FSA anticipates a common transfer format will be used. Grants to be transferred will be received from the current federal servicers.
225	Regarding "fulfillment services" as described in high level requirement #10, what delivery mechanisms/channels are expected for "notifications, forms and correspondence"? What is the expected annual volume of notices, forms and correspondence that should be assumed for pricing purposes?	FSA would expect postal mail, electronic mail, and text messaging. Volume of pages mailed are not available with Phase I.
226	Regarding "fulfillment services" as described in high level requirement #10, does the system scope include required printing and mail equipment for fulfillment services? (Requirements 10) Does FSA anticipate color printing?	The single servicing solution provider will be responsible to provide complete fulfillment services such as creating, preparing, addressing and standard mailing/postage.
227	What is defined as "all needed data" related to high level requirement #11?	Monitoring, oversight and auditing may cover all aspects of the solution provider's activities. Data could include borrower level, program level, financial, operational, systematic and/or any other data used in the execution of the contract.

228	Regarding Requirement 11, "Provide support for FSA operational monitoring, compliance reviews, operational and technical audits including access to all needed data, information, and personnel." Can FSA clarify the needed data, information and number of personnel required to perform these reviews?	Monitoring, oversight and auditing may cover all aspects of the solution provider's activities. Data/Information could include borrower level, program level, financial, operational, systematic and/or any other data/information used in the execution of the contract. The number of personnel needed would be dependent on the solution provided and the specific review/audit being conducted.
229	In Requirement 13, will there be any interface requirements for DMDC to support SCRA processing?	FSA anticipates the only interface to the DMDC will be the existing SCRA website interface.
230	In Requirement 13, will there be any interface requirements for IRS to support IDR processing?	FSA anticipates the existing IRS interface will remain in place.
231	Regarding Requirement 15, will functional requirements, related documentation, or even the system itself, for the current Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Servicing solution be available to leverage as part of incorporating functionally into the single servicing solution?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II. The current system is not expected to be provided by FSA for offerors to use.
232	Regarding Requirement 15, will functional requirements, related documentation, or even the system itself, for the current Total and Permanent Disability discharges (TPD) Servicing solution be available to leverage as part of incorporating functionally into the single servicing solution?	Additional detailed requirements will be provided to sources selected to participate in Phase II. The current system is not expected to be provided by FSA for offerors to use.
233	Does High Level Requirement 16 include any incremental standards that the TIVAS currently do not have to comply with?	Offers to this solicitation should be based on information provided within this solicitation.

234	Regarding Requirement 17, can FSA confirm that the FASS scope includes the provider being one of the customer service providers?	The single servicing solution provider is expected to meet the requirements as provided for the contract period of performance. Additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, will be added later, via a separate procurement action, and function in capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts primarily via incoming/outgoing call support. Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action.
235	Regarding requirement 17, is it expected that the other service providers will develop internal expertise to support troubleshooting and advanced processes or will the system provider need to provide a help desk and trouble ticket system?	The single servicing solution provider should expect to provide support in relation to system access issues, password resets, etc.
236	Regarding Requirement 17, can FSA provide greater clarity around the approach for the multiple service providers? For example, will all multiple service providers require access to the full portfolio or will some form of segmenting take place? If segmented, what does FSA see as the basis for the segmentation?	It is expected that customer service providers will have access to the entire portfolio of borrowers on the single servicing system.
237	Regarding requirement 17, Will training be an on-going requirement both when a new service provider comes online as well as training for replacement agents? What are the ongoing training requirements? How much training will the service providers be required to support?	FSA anticipates a 'train the trainer' environment with customer service providers. Ongoing support will be needed to keep all entities up to date on any changes made.
238	Regarding Requirement 17.d, can FSA provide more description about what "Contact distributions" refers to?	Contact distributions include the ability to successfully allocate call volumes to multiple entities.

239	Regarding Constraint 4, can FSA provide additional guidance on their intention around hosting? We assume FSA's intention is to host the solution with the provider. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department.
240	If there is intention to eventually move this to a government datacenter, when should we assume that would occur?	FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department.
241	Is contractor permitted to leverage 3rd-party services to deliver part of the solution?	The offeror may use subcontractors. All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution.
242	Can FSA define the timeline for bringing on the multiple service providers? We assume the multiple service providers will be available to answer borrower calls at the time volume is converted onto the new system, can FSA confirm this? If not the case, how does FSA foresee calls and other operational functions currently done by the TIVAS (workforce management, scheduling, analytics) being performed in the interim?	Customer service contact center provider requirements will be defined in a future procurement action that we anticipate will begin within 12 months after award of this solicitation.
243	Please confirm that the system will enforce this assignment, preventing customer service providers from viewing data about borrowers assigned to other servicers.	All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution. It is expected that customer service contact center providers will have access to the entire portfolio of borrowers on the single servicing system.
244	In order to minimize disruption to borrowers, will existing servicers that are awarded a new customer service provider contract continue to service their existing portfolio of borrowers using the new single solution system?	All accounts will be maintained within a single portfolio on the single servicing solution. It is expected that customer service contact center providers will have access to the entire portfolio of borrowers on the single servicing system.

245	I was just curious if this is a new requirement or there is an incumbent? If so, would you be able to provide the contract details (such as: Vendor Name, Contract Number, Award Date, Value)?	<p>There are currently ten companies that have contracts with the Department of Education for Student Loan Servicing. Those contracts are posted on FBO.gov.</p> <p>Information regarding the current Title IV Additional Servicers (TIVAS) can be found here: https://www.fbo.gov/?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=34301ad62b9dc483e195efa6c793336a&tab=core&_cview=1)</p> <p>Information regarding the Not for Profit (NFP) Servicers can be found here: https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=ce0c39577f38f0907d766bc3b46df6ed&tab=core&_cview=1)</p>
246	I noticed that in the solicitation it says that the servicing contract could cover default collections. Does that mean that the contract for PCAs is being roped into this one? Or are they two separate contracting processes?	Currently, these are two separate contract vehicles. There is a solicitation for the PCAs on FBO.gov.
247	I see on the FedBizOpps site that the servicing (https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=e23ab760a842d3f001f6a7500dbf76dd&tab=core&_cview=0) and debt collection contracts appear to be separate (https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=2fc9caba34a9c5f65fb9eb37550df06a&tab=core&_cview=1). If you all could confirm that the processes are separate I would really appreciate it.	Currently, these are two separate contract vehicles.
248	In 2.0 BASIS ON WHICH POTENTIAL SOURCES ARE TO BE SELECTED TO SUBMIT OFFERS IN THE SECOND PHASE should the last sentence of the first paragraph read Phase I (Versus Phase II)?	The sentence reads "The following are the factors on which offerors will be selected for consideration for Phase II of this selection process." This is accurate; the purpose of the Phase I solicitation is to determine who will be selected for consideration for Phase II.
249	What is the expected turnaround time for the Phase II solicitation?	The Government intends to make the award by the end of calendar year 2016. However, this is subject to change.

250	When will the Government determine which type of contract it will issue?	The Government will determine the type of contract upon award.
251	If the Government elects to use a firm fixed price contract, will there be award fee incentives, performance incentives and/or delivery incentives?	This will be determined at contract award.
252	In reference to prime contractor/subcontractor, do the qualifications and past performance of subcontractors count towards the qualifying experience of the prime vendor?	Yes.
253	In reference to teaming arrangements, do the qualifications and past performance of team members counts toward the qualifying experience of the team bid?	Yes.
254	The Solicitation references a sale or license of the system, but also indicates the Department will not pay annual licensing fees. Is the Department agreeable to paying other fees on an annual basis, such as maintenance, support and license fees for third party products?	The Department expects a single servicing solution provided to the Government with an unlimited right to use, and the payment structure will be determined at the time of award.
255	Is it the Department's expectation that the offeror will propose a system price inclusive of operational support for the system, maintenance, support and any licensing fees for third party products associated with the solution?	See question #254
256	If the answer to the question above is no, is it the Department's expectation that the system price, including the components discussed above, will be paid as an upfront, one time cost, with no ongoing annual fees of any kind?	The payment structure will be determined at the time of award.
257	If the answer to the question above is no, what components may be included in the system price?	The payment structure will be determined at the time of award.

258	In Section 3, item 5 of the solicitation, is the first bullet requesting pricing for the system only? Please confirm the format / method you expect the offeror to use for the price submission.	There is no specific format. The Government will review the estimated costs to provide a single servicing solution with an unlimited right to use.
259	Please confirm that the awardee of this procurement is not precluded from priming and participating in the future procurement activities discussed in 1.2.	The awardee of this procurement will be providing customer service and would therefore not need to participate in the future procurement activities discussed in section 1.2 of the solicitation.
260	We assume that the winning provider (and team members) on this opportunity will not be precluded from bidding as one or more of the multiple service providers. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	See question #259
261	If an entity is a team member or subcontractor for the awarded single servicing solution provider, can this same entity be a prime contractor for the Department as a customer service provider? (we assume yes but wanted to clarify)	See question #259
262	Are there any procurement restrictions for this solicitation that prohibit an offeror from participating on multiple teams as either prime and/or subcontractor?	No.
263	Can an offeror submit a proposal both individually and as part of a team?	Yes.
264	Does 2.1.2 ("Selection Factors") require previous contracting experience with Federal Student Aid? If not, will the Department require that the company have prior experience servicing other forms of debt/private student loans?	Per section 2.1.2, past performance includes, but is not limited to, servicing a large number of student loan borrowers successfully and converting a large volume of borrower accounts from another student loan servicing solution onto the offeror's solution.
265	Regarding 2.1.4 ("Selection Factors"), does Federal Student Aid have a current estimated cost of these services?	The estimated cost will vary based upon the conceptual approach. The Government does have a cost estimate for providing an overall solution based on historical contract pricing.

266	Would inability to demonstrate consistent and accurate servicing (2.2 - "Information Submitted by Offerors") through backlogs on income-driven repayment enrollment and re-certification, wrongful denial of defense to repayment requests, or inaccurate information on various student loan programs, such as Servicemember Civil Relief Act or Public Service Loan Forgiveness, prevent offerors from reaching phase 2 of the solicitation?	The Government will consider all past performance, including, but not limited to, servicing a large number of student loan borrowers successfully and converting a large volume of borrower accounts from another student loan servicing solution onto the offeror's solution. The Government reserves the right to review any information available in reviewing past performance (e.g., PPIRS, publicly available, etc.).
267	In section 2.2, you state that the contracting officer will select the offerors that are eligible to participate in Phase 2. Who is the contracting officer that will be making this decision? Is the decision solely within the discretion of this officer or will others provide input? If so, who?	In accordance with EDAR 3415.302-70, the contracting officer will select the offerors that are eligible to participate in the second phase of the process. The contracting officer will limit the number of the selected offerors to the number of sources that the contracting officer determines is appropriate and in the best interests of the Federal government.
268	Will prime contract solicitors be allowed to leverage the past performance or capabilities of subcontractors to meet solicitation selection factors?	Yes.
269	Will FSA accept proposals from multiple servicers who are working together under a teaming or joint venture agreement?	Yes.
270	Will FSA accept proposals from a direct prime who may also be a subcontractor on another proposal?	Yes.
271	Under Section 3.0, item 5, should the first bullet be considered the upfront cost to deliver a solution and the second bullet be considered the ongoing annual costs to host and maintain the solution?	The first bullet should provide estimated costs to deliver the servicing system/solution with an unlimited right to use. The second bullet, which requests the cost of servicing borrowers, should be considered the ongoing servicing fees.
272	In #5 please confirm that the second bullet is requesting only the estimated operational cost to service loans by status and the cost (from bullet point #1) of running and maintaining the system should be excluded	See question #271

273	In response to the Information Submitted by Offerors (3.0), Cost Estimate (5), should the bidder assume total costs over the period of the base of five years in calculating estimated costs for each specific type of cost by volume?	Offerors should submit the average cost of servicing borrowers in the identified statuses per year for one year of servicing. See also question #271.
274	Under Section 3.0, item 6, please clarify the response does not require pricing for each of the contract scenarios provided but is looking for how the different contract types could impact the pricing provided in response to item 5.	Offerors are asked to describe how each different approach would affect the estimated cost for each scenario. One way of doing so is to provide pricing for each of the scenarios.
275	Under Section 3.0, item 5, what assumptions should the offeror make in providing such cost estimates, given that the exact contract structure is unknown? For example, should we assume that all costs borne by the vendor to enhance/expand the proposed solution will be reimbursed?	The payment structure will be determined at the time of award. Any assumptions should be identified in the proposal.
276	Under Constraints in Attachment A, it states that the solution should be provided "with no annual licensing fees". In Section 3.0, item 1, it states that the system could be provided "via sale or license". Please clarify: Is a license arrangement acceptable? Is it only an annual license fee that is unacceptable?	A one-time licensing fee granting the Government an unlimited right to use is acceptable, but an annual licensing fee is not.
277	In 2.1 Selection Factors (1), does the Go/No Go criteria need to be met by the prime offeror, or can it be met by the team of offerors?	The criteria can be met by the prime or by the team.

278	<p>In Section 3.0.6, one of the cost components is the following: “Average cost of servicing borrowers in the following statuses per year for one year of servicing at the volumes of 8 million, 20 million, and 35 million borrower accounts, assuming a multiple customer service provider environment. Please include additional assumptions made in identifying the estimated costs. “ Are we being asked to estimate the FASS program costs or the total FSA costs including Multiple Service Providers? Is this to be provided as an aggregate cost per status or on a per borrower basis?</p>	<p>This should be the estimated costs for the servicing solution (system and customer service).</p>
279	<p>Does Department of Education have a maximum number of allowable teaming partners in one bid?</p>	<p>No.</p>
280	<p>In response to the Selection Factors (2.1), Past Performance (2), can FSA provide additional guidance on the specific type of experience that satisfies this requirement?</p>	<p>Offerors should submit documentation that demonstrates past performance, including, but not limited to, servicing a large number of student loan borrowers successfully and converting a large volume of borrower accounts from another student loan servicing solution onto the offeror’s solution.</p>
281	<p>Related to section 1.2, "future procurement actions", please provide guidance on how we should account for this kind of support activity in the cost estimate. Moreover, please provide related guidance for Change Requests in general. Should some amount of activity be modeled into the estimate, or should the contractor assume that all CRs will be billed as they occur incremental to this cost estimate (i.e., average annual cost per account)?</p>	<p>Offerors should provide a cost estimate for a solution that supports a multiple customer service provider environment. The payment structure will be determined at the time of award.</p>

282	In Section 5, is FSA expecting hardware and software expenses to be included as part of the average annual cost estimated in this response, or called out separately? Does hosting by the Government versus by the contractor impact the answer?	The Department expects a single servicing solution provided to the Government with an unlimited right to use. FSA will consider proposals to be hosted by the provider or by the Department.
283	Will Phase II of the solicitation include a similar opportunity to ask clarifying questions? Will this opportunity be in a similar email-based approach, or will there be an opportunity to meet and present our solution?	Yes, there will be an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The approach is to be determined.
284	Regarding section 2.1, will FSA confirm that, if a team is formed, that any past performance experience from any team member, can be used to satisfy the selection factors?	Yes.
285	Regarding section 4.1, the Government says additional market research may be conducted. Would the government consider conducting site visits to include system demonstrations as part of this research?	Not at this time.
286	In Section 4.1, the Contracting Officer will post the names of any subcontractors or teaming arrangements eligible for Phase II. Can FSA confirm that teams can continue to add team members after Phase I?	Yes. The offerors selected to participate in Phase II may propose additional team members, as long as the proposed team continues to meet the requirements of the solicitation.
287	Regarding Section 4.4, do the submission's cover page and table of contents count toward the total page count of 10 (not including an additional 5 pages for cost information) as related to section	No.
288	This effort will require guiding student loan borrowers through a major rebranding effort. We recommend FSA add a weighted criteria giving credit for demonstrated performance in managing such an effort. Would FSA add such a criterion?	This is not a Phase I evaluation factor. Phase II evaluation factors will be determined at a later date.

289	<p>Since a growing portion of the total accounts on the single platform will be Inactive, how does FSA recommend the contractors account for this expense in the cost estimates? For example, could an 8th loan status type be used to price an Inactive account?</p>	<p>The payment structure will be determined at the time of award.</p>
290	<p>Please clarify a potential conflict in Section 2.1 ("... at least 20 million borrowers within two years, and at least 35 million borrowers within three years.") and High Level Requirement #3 ("... support the entire FSA portfolio within two years of award ..."). With 30 million borrowers today, the volumes in Section 2.1 would appear to conflict, but we do not want to assume.</p>	<p>There is no conflict. Please follow submission requirements as stated in section 2.1.</p>
291	<p>In the case of a joint bid, what, if any, separation measures between or among team members would be required by FSA in the bidding process?</p>	<p>If the Government receives a joint bid, the Government will determine whether or not there is a violation of FAR 3.303, which states that "the filing of a joint bid by two or more competitors when at least one of the competitors has sufficient technical capability and productive capacity for contract performance would violate antitrust laws."</p>

292	<p>You have stated that federal contract procurement regulations and rules limit the information you can provide to the public. What are those specific procurement rules and what are the restrictions on public information?</p>	<p>There are several laws and regulations that govern the disclosure of information generated or received by the government in the course of a federal contract procurement. In general, those laws and regulations restrict the release of confidential proprietary information of businesses and other organizations, including information in bids and proposals, the agency's internal source selection information, contractor performance evaluation reports, and personally identifiable information kept in agency systems of records.</p> <p>Among those laws and regulations are the Procurement Integrity Act, 41 U.S.C. § 423, and its implementing regulation at Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 3.104-4, which prohibit the release of bid or proposal information and the agency's source selection information. The Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S. Code § 1905, prohibits disclosure of trade secrets and certain other confidential and proprietary information of firms. More generally, FAR Subpart 5.4 governs the release of information during the acquisition process, with FAR 5.401(a) requiring agencies to maintain "a high level of business security" in order to preserve the integrity of the acquisition process. FAR 42.1503 provides for protecting certain information about a contractor's past performance which may be used in an evaluation. The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a, and its implementing regulations at FAR Subpart 24.1, as well as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and its implementing regulations at FAR Subpart 24.2, provide further guidance on responding to requests for information from the public and for protecting sensitive information and records.</p> <p>Note that this procurement is being conducted in accordance with FSA's Procurement Flexibility Statute (20 USC 1018a) which grants the agency discretion in fashioning the procurement process, including regarding the extent of information releases and the recipients thereof, consistent with the best interest of the government and basic principles of federal procurement law.</p>
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293	Under Section 3.0, item 5, is the expectation of the responder to provide a cost differentiation between ownership of the single solution versus providing the Government with an unlimited right to use?	No - FSA is not requesting the cost differentiation, FSA is requesting the cost of unlimited right to use (ownership is acceptable, but not required).
294	In response to the Information Submitted by Offerors (3.0), Narrative (1), can FSA further clarify the definition and related parameters of "unlimited right to use?"	Unlimited right to use means that the Government or its agents do not pay ongoing costs to use the solution during or after the contract's period of performance.
295	Page 2, Section 2.1, item 2; What are FSA's requirements or standards for measuring the successful servicing of a large number of student loans borrower accounts or should the current metrics used by FSA be considered that standard? Please provide any additional measures or criteria FSA apply to this evaluation.	Offerors should provide documentation that demonstrates the capacity and experience to service the stated number of student loan borrowers.
296	Page 2, Section 2.1, item 3; Please provide a description or requirements that FSA has for defining the conceptual approach. To effectively compare this criteria between multiple contractors additional definition would help ensure consistency.	The conceptual approach should include a high level description of the activities the offeror would execute to have the ability to meet the schedule and volumes in the solicitation.
297	Page 2, Section 2.1, item 4; If a contractor has alternative cost structures to propose other than a status based cost structure can that be proposed in addition to providing a status based cost estimate?	At this time FSA will review the cost estimate only to ensure it is consistent with the conceptual approach. Alternative cost structures are not requested at this time.
298	We assume that FSA will use an independent third-party to assess the scalability of the proposed systems after the Phase I selection. Can FSA confirm this assumption?	FSA will identify subject matter experts to assist in the review of the solicitation responses as needed.
299	When can we expect procurement for small business support for servicing activities and what is the expected scope of that procurement?	This will be determined at a later date.

300	How many customer service providers will be prime contractors in the multi servicer environment?	This will be determined at a later date.
301	The solicitation states that there may be subsequent solicitations or procurements for small businesses. Can you provide more information about future solicitations?	Not at this time.
302	When is the expected date for single-portal launch?	The Department has worked with the community and across the Administration for two years to receive input on how to improve federal student loan servicing. Consistent with procurement laws and regulations and in order to preserve the integrity of the acquisition process, ED will conduct listening sessions only after the Phase 1 selection process is completed and before the Phase 2 solicitation is issued. That will allow us to get more information from interested parties before we lock down the detailed requirements for the products and services to be delivered. We intend to award a new contract for the new federal student loan system by the end of the calendar year. The existing servicing contracts expire in 2019.
303	Will federal loans for a borrower who had a Stafford loan issued by Sallie Mae now serviced by Navient be rolled into this portal?	The Department intends to roll all borrower accounts into the single system solution.

304	Is this to create uniformity amongst contracted loan servicing companies?	Consistent with the President's Student Aid Bill Of Rights, one of the Department's objectives, is to have borrowers a) receive consistent and high level service under a single Department of Education banner regardless of who actually manages their account, b) have access to a single portal to receive information about all of their loans and to be able to make payments and change repayment plans, and c) be able to register complaints through a single complaint system. Through these changes we intend to create a more uniform experience and one that holds customer service providers accountable for providing the highest level of service. The specific requirements for this procurement will be those specified in the solicitation documents published by the Department's Contracting Officer.
305	When will it go live/be usable? (launch date)	The Department has worked with the community and across the Administration for two years to receive input on how to improve federal student loan servicing. Consistent with procurement laws and regulations and in order to preserve the integrity of the acquisition process, ED will conduct listening sessions only after the Phase 1 selection process is completed and before the Phase 2 solicitation is issued. That will allow us to get more information from interested parties before we lock down the detailed requirements for the products and services to be delivered. We intend to award a new contract for the new federal student loan system by the end of the calendar year. The existing servicing contracts expire in 2019.
306	What is this platform going to entail?	See answer to question #304 above.
307	What is the goal of the new platform?	See answer to question #304 above.

308	How can students find out more about the new system?	A central objective to be achieved as part of this procurement is to create more seamless communication with borrowers and to make the Education Department the "common brand" for these communications. Currently, we have a process in place to notify borrowers when loans are transferred between servicers, and have recently enhanced transfer disclosures to borrowers. All borrowers will be informed about the new platform. Borrowers will be directed from prior servicers to the single portal when it is complete. Detailed requirements for contract transition as well as requirements related to communications with borrowers may be included in the resulting contracts in which case those terms would govern the contractor or contractors' activities.
309	Which FISMA (low, moderate, or high) accreditation level is required to receive an ATO?	FSA anticipates the accreditation level will be Moderate.
310	Given the consolidation from multiple servicing platforms (to a Single Platform), we assume that the Disaster Recovery requirements will be greater given the increased risk exposure to downtime. Please confirm that the Recovery Time Objective (i.e., potential downtime) will be no more than 24 hours, and Recovery Point Objective (i.e., potential data loss) will be no more than 2 hours.	The outcome of the BIA will determine the RTO and RPO. Generally the RTO is 24 or 48 hours and the RPO is 48 or 72 hours.
311	Regarding Requirement 21, does FSA envision requiring any additional controls from NIST SP 800-53, above the Moderate baseline (e.g., SC-28(1), Cryptographic Protection of Data at Rest)?	The completion of the FIPS-199 will determine which security controls must be applied to the system. In addition, there must be a tailoring process to determine if controls beyond those identified in the FIPS-199 such as encryption of data at rest are required.
312	In granting an ATO, will FSA use the "continuous authorization" model or the re-certification of the system every three years?	Once the ATO is granted, Continuous Monitoring must be implemented to continuously assess risk to the system. The Contractor will be required to submit reports at least quarterly to FSA.

313	Regarding Constraint 15, please provide insight into the FISMA related data calls that will be necessary to address?	The FISMA related data calls typically will require the contractor to provide metrics and other IT related information in areas such as Audits, Inventory Plan of Action and Milestone etc. The data calls usually support requests for information from FSA Management or OMB.
314	Regarding Requirement 21, will the FIPS 199 data categorization of the system be Moderate?	The system categorization is based on the outcome of the FIPS-199. The categorization is Moderate.
315	Regarding Requirement 21, the servicing system will be within a FISMA compliant boundary. There will be ISA between the system and the customer service providers requiring access to the system. Who will be responsible for ensuring the requisite security and FISMA C&A for the customer service providers utilizing the system? Will the single system provider be responsible for data security at the service providers?	The single system provider is responsible for implementing FISMA compliant security within their own boundary, including any sub-contractor facilities/activities. The single system provider is responsible for supporting FSA's security oversight of other vendors and systems that interact with the single servicing solution, and may be required to expand its security boundary to accommodate the additional customer service providers. Customer service providers will be responsible to meet all security requirements as determined for those potential procurement actions.
316	Regarding Requirement 21, in order to complete the ATO, will FSA provide and fund the Certification Agent, or does FSA expect that the company developing and operating the systems hire and fund contractors to provide the requisite Certification process and the development of the Security Assessment Report?	FSA will supply FEDRAMP assessors to review the system and documentation provided by the servicer. Subcontractors are not considered to be independent. FSA will perform IV&V to determine if system meets security Accreditation requirements for issuing an Authority to Operate.
317	In Constraint 5, what is meant by "compliance activities"? Who is "contractor(s)" referring to, the single system provider or the multiple servicers?	The contractor is the successful offeror. The offeror, and all sub-contractors, must adhere to all required security requirements and are subject to FSA monitoring of activities in addition to audits.

318	Does the provision to allow for possible Government hosting create any specific requirements/constraints of Contractor with respect to use of products, vendors, or solutions?	The solution would have to be able to operate within the domain of ED's data center's infra-structure. The constraints/requirements may be different based on the solutions suggested.
319	Regarding the constraint "Solution shall support a multiple customer service provider environment" what is your definition of "environment"?	The offeror should provide an environment that allows additional vendors, referred to in this solicitation as customer service providers, to simultaneously access the servicing system as well as all portions of the solution needed to function in a capacity that will help borrowers manage their accounts.
320	Define what is meant by a "flexible" solution	The solution should allow for functional/business/system changes without requiring large scale, systematic modifications that require long periods of time and high costs.